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Demographic, social and migration statistics: gender issues in measurement of paid and unpaid work

Implementation plan of a project on gender issues in the measurement of paid and unpaid work

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report contains the implementation plan of a United Nations Statistics Division project on gender issues in the measurement of paid and unpaid work. It briefly describes the rationale and objectives of the project and its major expected outputs. The project was developed with the United Nations Development Programme and the International Development Research Centre/Canada. It follows up on the recommendations on time-use statistics of the Statistical Commission at its twenty-eighth session and on the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women.

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I. Introduction

1. The Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women recommends that national, regional and international statistical services and relevant governmental and United Nations agencies in cooperation with research and documentation organizations work to "improve data collection on the full contribution of women and men to the economy, including their participation in the informal sector(s)"; and to "develop an international classification of activities for time-use statistics that is sensitive to the differences between women and men in remunerated and unremunerated work, and collect data disaggregated by sex".[1]

2. Further, the Statistical Commission, at its twenty-eighth session, emphasized the value of time-use statistics for a range of national and international socio-economic statistics, including gender statistics, and requested that a draft classification of time-use activities be prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division as a basis for further research and special studies.[2]

3. Following these recommendations, the Division, together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Development and Research Centre/Canada (IDRC), developed the project on gender issues in the measurement of paid and unpaid work. An expert group meeting, convened from 31 March to 2 April 1998, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO), reviewed a comprehensive overview of the range of problems and issues which need to be addressed to improve statistics on paid and unpaid work, and defined activities which the project could carry out at the international, regional and national levels. The meeting agreed on three broad areas of statistical work for consideration, as follows:

(a) Promotion of the collection of time-use data, particularly in developing countries, through methodological work and other means;

(b) Compilation of statistics on "difficult-to-measure" sectors of the economy, including the informal sector, home-based work and subsistence agriculture;

(c) Improvement of the measurement of paid and unpaid work in labour-force statistics.

II. Project objectives and implementation plan

4. The implementation plan is described in the annex to the present report.

A. Promoting collection of time-use data in developing countries

5. The project will promote and provide technical assistance to Governments in the conduct of national time-use surveys, with the objective of revising and further developing the trial international classification of activities for time-use statistics and preparing guidelines and methods for national time-use surveys.

6. A trial international classification of activities for time-use statistics was developed and reviewed by an expert group which met in New York from 13 to 16 October 1997. The classification has been tested in time-use surveys in Nigeria and Palestine, and is being used in the planned South African survey. Based on the experience in those countries and others where time-use surveys are also being conducted, the classification will be revised at the two-digit level and developed into a three-digit classification.

7. The project will also develop a manual to provide guidance on design issues for data collection on time-use. The manual, which will cover independent time-use surveys and multi-purpose surveys, and will highlight the special issues raised by those surveys in developing countries, will be based on ongoing national work and pilot studies supported by the project. An expert group meeting will be convened in September 2000 to review and assess country experiences relating to both time-use methods and the classification of time-use activities.

8. Important developments in the field of time-use surveys which the project builds on include the time-use study of the Statistical Office of the European Communities, which seeks to harmonize national time-use surveys in European countries and an increasing number of data-collection activities on time-use now taking place in developing countries. Benin, the Dominican Republic and Morocco now have data from national time-use surveys. India, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Oman, Palestine and the Republic of Korea have recently completed, or are carrying out, field work on their surveys, and the United Nations Statistics Division is assessing the methods applied therein. Under the project, the Division is assisting Nigeria in planning a national time-use survey,

building on their pilot work, and assisting South Africa in the preparatory phase of a planned national time-use survey.

B. Compilation of statistics on "difficult-to-measure" sectors of the economy

9. The project also aims to improve the compilation and analysis of statistics on women in the informal sector, homeworkers and street vendors. The development and impact of work in this area is substantially enhanced by collaboration with Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), a worldwide coalition representing international organizations, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations concerned with statistics, research, programmes and policies on women in the informal sector of the economy. Among the organizations represented are the United Nations Development Fund for Women, ILO, Harvard University, L'Institut Français de Recherche Scientifique pour le Développement en Cooperation and the Self-Employed Women's Association. In these efforts, WIEGO and the United Nations Statistics Division are also collaborating with the Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics.

10. A meeting of the WIEGO Working Group on Statistics was held on 17 and 18 October 1997 to plan future work and identify related ongoing work. A first phase of work reviewed, analysed and compiled existing statistics on home-based workers, street vendors and the informal sector. Five papers were prepared and presented at the second meeting of the Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics, in April 1998. The topics covered were: a data compilation and methods on women working in the informal sector and on street vendors in Africa; concepts and classifications to improve statistics on home-based workers and the informal sector; and a survey on homeworkers in Mexico.

C. Improving measurement of paid and unpaid work in labour force statistics

11. Main areas of concern in improving the coverage and content of labour force statistics are completeness of enumeration of women's and men's economic activities in labour force surveys, adequacy of economic classification for reflecting variations in women's economic activities, and greater utilization and analysis of labour force statistics. The project is collaborating with ILO on methodological work related to the inclusion of the variable "place of work" in household-based surveys. This will contribute to improving the measurement of home-based workers and street vendors, which are important components of the labour force in developing countries.

III. Points for discussion

12. Does the Commission agree with the project plan as described? What additions or modifications should be made?

13. Are there any activities or ongoing work that should be brought to the attention of those responsible for the project?

Notes

[1] See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (A/CONF.177/20), paras. 206 (e) and (g).

[2] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 8* (E/1995/28), para. 58.

Annex

Project on Gender Issues in Measurement of Paid and Unpaid Work: implementation plan for pilot phase
Period covered: September 1999-September 2000

Output	*Activity*	*Timetable* S O N D J F M A M J J A S
Primary focus: promotion and assessment of ongoing time-use surveys in countries with the objective of developing guidelines and methods for national work and an international classification of activities for time-use statistics for both developing and developed countries.		
1. *Methodological materials on various aspects of time-use surveys*	1.1. Provide technical assistance in planning and design of time-use surveys to countries (Cuba, Komi Republic/Russia, Nigeria, South Africa, Thailand)	
	1.2. Document and assess methods used in collection of time-use statistics (Benin, Dominican Republic, India, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nigeria, Oman, Palestine, Republic of Korea)	
	1.3. Prepare technical paper which reviews status of time-use surveys in developing countries and discusses general methodological issues that arise in undertaking time-use surveys in those countries and present at international meetings (Cuba, Ahmedabad) Paper will also be the basis for a section in *The World's Women 2000: Trends and Statistics*	
2. *International time-use activity classification*	2.1. Provide technical assistance in testing of United Nations trial time-use classification (Cuba, Komi Republic, Nigeria, South Africa)	
	2.2. Based on pilot surveys and discussions at meetings and time-use web site, revise trial international classification and develop 3-digit level codes	

Output		Activity	Timetable (S O N D J F M A M J J A S)
3. *Web site on time use*	3.1.	Plan, design and create web site that will facilitate the dissemination of information on time-use statistics and host discussion groups on time-use survey methods	
	3.2.	Prepare promotional materials and dissemination plan	
4. *International expert group meeting on time-use methods and classification*	4.1.	Plan, organize and obtain meeting funding	
	4.2.	Prepare and disseminate methodological materials (draft guidelines, recommendations on time-use classification, etc.) to experts/participants	
	4.3.	Document conference discussions and revision of methodological materials	
Additional focus: improving statistics on women's participation in difficult-to-measure sectors of the labour market, such as homeworkers, street vendors and the informal sector.			
5. *Methodological materials on measurement of women's paid and unpaid work*	5.1.	Draft recommendations on measurement of the variable "place of work" in labour force surveys in identifying informal sector workers, homeworkers and street vendors	
	5.2.	Provide technical assistance to countries in improving coverage and content of labour force surveys, especially in the measurement of women's paid and unpaid work	
	5.3.	Organize panel on gender issues in the measurement of paid and unpaid work at Beijing+5 conference	

Output	Activity	Timetable S O N D J F M A M J J A S
	5.4. Prepare technical paper on gender issues in measurement of the informal sector for May 2000 meeting of Commonwealth Statistical Offices	
6. Compilations of statistics on women in the informal sector, homeworkers and street vendors	6.1. Provide technical assistance to WIEGO in compilation of statistics on the informal sector, homeworkers and street vendors	
	6.1.1. Meet with WIEGO to plan and further develop strategies and outputs of project component	
	6.1.2. Compile existing statistics on size, characteristics and contribution of the informal sector to gross domestic product, disaggregated by gender	
	6.1.3. Carry out national comparative and detailed estimates in selected countries through further analysis of existing data	
	6.1.4. Develop and test new concepts, methods and classifications to improve statistics on street vendors and home-based workers in collaboration with the Delhi Group, ILO/International Conference of Labour Statisticians, HomeNet and Street Vendors Alliances	
	6.2. Provide technical assistance in the generation of informal sector statistics in Asia under a proposed United Nations Statistics Division-funded programme for the region	